

Rounding the corner

FUMA looking to make long-awaited postseason push

By Ryan Yemen



Michael Idziak (above) brings an elite level of speed to the Blue Devils soccer team. (Fork Union)

There were three teams in Central Virginia that qualified for the VISAA Division 1 playoffs in 2010 between Blue Ridge, St. Anne's-Belfield and Woodberry Forest, with Fork Union just missing the 16-team tournament, despite boasting the only winning record amongst the four. The Blue Devils slid in their last two games to leave them on the outside looking in and they remain a team that has its sights set on breaking an almost 15-year postseason drought.

Fork Union graduated a trio of seniors in Dustin Russell, Piotr Drwal and Mason Covington, but also lost a handful of players as it usually does between transfers.

"That's the hardest part about the job," Mariuz Mostrag said. "Because it's Fork Union you're going to have players coming and going, and a lot of new faces. So the chemistry is key."

In his fourth season at the helm for the Blue Devils, Mostrag has high hopes for his team as it still returns key players in Gam Jangham and Michael Idziak.

Jangham is one of the most experienced players Fork Union has, now entering his third year with the team which helps immensely in knowing the system. A midfielder, Jangham has won his coach over through the years thanks to his decision making.

"He's not the most athletic, but he's one of the smartest people on team," Mostrag said.

"He's really good at making the wise decision."

Idziak doubles as a talented middle distance runner for the Blue Devils' notoriously strong track and field program and was a state champion this spring in the 800-meter race.

"Michael gives us speed that translates really well to soccer and great energy," Mostrag said.

Last fall he developed as a scorer with the

highlight coming in a game-winning strike with five minutes remaining against Virginia Episcopal. However Mostrag wants to take advantage of his speed and experience and put him more on the defensive end, potentially as a right fullback.

"I'm still brainstorming and haven't really decided how I want play him," Mostrag said. "But I think on defense he would be able to take advantage of his speed in open space and along the side."

In terms of incoming talent, the Blue Devils welcome one of the more intriguing transfers to this area – Piotr Wojenski. Just like his new coach, Wojenski hails from Poland and has worked his way up the soccer ranks to be able to play for his country's 18 and under national team.

"I've been trying to get him to come here for years," Mostrag said. "Finally he had a buddy of his go play in college in Vermont and told him about his experience playing soccer in the United States. We're really excited about having him this year."

Another transfer that should make an immediate impact is Rich Lott who is coming over from Steward. The Blue Devils are familiar already with what Lott brings to the field as they played against the Spartans last year and walked away with a 3-2 win.

FUMA has a few weeks to try and put the puzzle together as the team started practice on August 22nd, and will get a scrimmage against Woodberry Forest, a playoff team last year, before jumping into regular season play on September 10th in a tournament in Lynchburg. Last season this team got off to a solid 3-1-1 start. If they can do the same and avoid the slide, the Blue Devils should be able to get the coveted playoff experience they've been after. ✖